

# Preserving Our Open Lands

## Fremont Open Space Initiative

*On March 13<sup>th</sup> there will be a very important vote that will shape the future of Fremont. That vote - whether to set aside land as permanently protected open space through the purchase of conservation easements or land - has garnered the support of the Board of Selectman as well as the Budget Committee because it will preserve the rural character of Fremont and because it is the fiscally responsible thing to do as it will curb the rate at which our taxes increase. Below we try to answer some of the questions that people have brought to us regarding this bond initiative. We urge all residents of Fremont to learn more by contacting an Open Space Advisory member or by attending our final Open Space Forum on Tuesday March 2 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall.*

### **How is The Open Space Bond Issue Different and How Will it Affect Taxes?**

This bond issue gives the town permission to fund the purchase of conservation easements or land UP TO and NOT TO EXCEED \$4 million. Unlike construction bonds Fremont has approved in the past such as the safety complex and library bonds, this \$4 million bond would NOT be purchased up front. You would NOT see an immediate or a full tax impact in any given year. It would begin to show up on your taxes in a couple of years and each year after that would only reflect the value of the easements or land *that was purchased in that year.*

**Example:** If \$1 million in easements or land was purchased in a given year, your increase in taxes would be about 49 cents per thousand (assessed value of your home.)

### **What is a Conservation Easement And Why Would I Want One?**

A conservation easement is a VOLUNTARY agreement between a landowner and a land trust (an easement holder such as Rockingham Land Trust) to sell or give *particular owner-specified development rights* on all or *part* of a piece of property. Such easements enable the landowner to retain ownership of their land while saving it from development.

### **Why Care About Open Space?**

If you want to keep your taxes down while slowing the rate of development in town and want to preserve some of the open space in town.

If you want to benefit from the equity in your land, but still want to keep it to use as you always have, it's worth checking it out. Farming, forestry recreational use or

even sale of the land is not restricted by an easement.

If you need the funds from the sale of your land but don't want to see the integrity of that land or the rural character of Fremont compromised by development.

If you have land to pass on to your family, but want to limit the impact of the estate taxes, utilizing a conservation easement may keep your land in the family by lessening estate taxes.

### **What Determines the Value of an Easement?**

Easement terms are customized by each landowner. The cost is completely dependant on the landowner's specifications and on the assessed value of the land.

**Example:** The value of an easement would be less if it were on swampland, because swampland has little development value.

**Example:** An easement that prohibits hanging purple laundry every other Tuesday would not be very valuable, since the restriction is so trivial.

The greater the land protection written into the easement, the greater the income derived by the sale of the development rights.

### **Still not convinced that preserving land costs less than developing land?**

**Come to the final Open Space Forum: Tuesday March 2 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall.**

**Phil Auger, Land Educator from the UNH Cooperative Extension Program will be present to answer questions.**

## ***The Decision is Yours!***

**This bond issue gives all residents the opportunity to keep their taxes lower  
and their town more beautiful.**

**It gives residents who own open space the option of preserving their land.**

**THIS BOND ISSUE WILL BE ARTICLE 12 AT TOWN MEETING ON Saturday  
March 13 at 5:00 PM**

**Recommended by the Fremont Board of Selectmen and the Fremont Budget  
Committee**

**You decide where you want to put your tax dollars.**

**Would you rather spend more to support more development?**

**Or would you rather spend less and keep more of your open space?**



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c/o Fremont Conservation Commission  
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